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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 25 September 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. PEERTHUM (Vice-President)	(Mauritius)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [125] (continued)

- Address by His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Mr. De Michelis (Italy)
  Mr. Shevardnadze (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
  Mr. Boulares (Tunisia)
  Mr. Asamoah (Ghana)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 125 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (Article 19 of the Charter)

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/45/515/Add.1, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his communication dated 18 September 1990, Guatemala has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. GEORGE VASSILIOU, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. George Vassiliou, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President VASSILIOU: I would like to begin by offering you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on assuming the high office of President of the General Assembly. It is only fitting that Malta, a fellow non-aligned and United-Nations-minded country, should be given the opportunity to guide this session of the General Assembly to successful fruition. Your election adds weight to the truth that all countries, large and small, have a role to play in the world of today and that of tomorrow. I would also like to thank the out-going President, Major-General Joseph Garba, for his skilful management of the forty-fourth session, which saw the encouraging trend towards consensus resolutions continue.

Allow me to echo the sentiments of previous speakers and welcome the Principality of Liechtenstein, a fellow small State, to the United Nations as its 160th Member, and allow me also to congratulate our friends from Yemen on their momentous decision to reunite their countries, and to welcome them here as a delegation of a united Yemen, although this means that we have one Member State less.

I would also like to express our great appreciation and esteem for the work of the Secretary-General, so much of which is connected with Cyprus, whose instructive and thoughtful report we have read with great interest. We commend his skill and commitment in handling the affairs of the United Nations and in further promoting the goals and objectives of this world Organization, which constitutes the moral and social conscience of mankind.

In the 12 months since I addressed the forty-fourth General Assembly, we have witnessed a rapid and dramatic succession of political developments. Some of those developments have been positive beyond expectation; others, quite the opposite. When taken together, however, they indicate that we are at a crucial juncture in world history. Like all such turning-points, the current one involves a period of transition characterized by both great opportunities and great difficulties.

(President Vassiliou)

Undeniably, the most important positive development of the past 12 months has been the coming to an end of the cold war between East and West, which was effectively buried in the rubble of the Berlin Wall last winter. Dialogue and co-operation are fast replacing distrust and confrontation.

The euphoria generated by these positive changes, however, has already received its first sharp blow. The crisis in the Gulf triggered by Iraq's invasion and occupation of neighbouring Kuwait demonstrates that the long road to a truly peaceful world is not an easy one. The crisis, however, also brought to the fore a united United Nations, whose resolutions were given bite as well as bark.

Cyprus, itself a small State and victim of military aggression by a larger neighbour, Turkey, strongly condemns the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait. We firmly support the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and express the hope that they can be effectively implemented without the use of force, but implemented they must be, and the earlier the better for all. Let us in this respect express the hope that the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait will, as President Mitterand so eloquently stated from this rostrum yesterday, pave the way to a speedy resolution of the other outstanding problems of our region.

I would also like to stress that there are very important lessons to be drawn by us all from the crisis in the Gulf, where the unrestricted supply of weapons and tolerance of other cases of aggression contributed to its happening. The first lesson is that despite, or even because of, the virtual erasure of the cold war lines of confrontation between East and West and the encouraging trend towards disarmament between them, regional conflicts may flare up in stark contrast to the peace epidemic on the broader East-West stage. As events on the United States-Soviet Union axis and in Europe divert attention from the periphery, as the

(President Vassiliou)

structures of the cold-war client-State control mechanisms disintegrate and as arms merchants seek to replace lost or declining main-line markets, so the possibility remains that conflicts can arise with the potential to destabilize the entire globe.

However, the international response to the crisis carries a clear message of hope, and this is the second lesson. In a distinct signal that the old divisive order no longer stands, the United States and the Soviet Union, unilaterally and collectively within the Security Council, delivered fundamentally the same message: that the world community, in its overwhelming majority - I would say, in its near totality - is not prepared to condone aggression or the use of force as means of implementing national claims. Peaceful negotiations, with due regard to the principles of international law, are the only permissible way to settle differences. In addition, the Gulf crisis has highlighted the key role of the United Nations in the handling of international conflicts, both as a forum for discussion and debate and as a body with the structure and authority to produce collective decisions guiding the international response to a given crisis situation.

(President Vassiliou)

It also illustrated that the international community should not through the United Nations appease itself with words but should seek ways to implement its resolutions through collective action, taking advantage of the changing order of world political relations.

Security Council resolutions are as binding today as they were in 1974, but as we know only too well they have not always been implemented. The Republic of Cyprus has been a firm advocate of the implementation of United Nations resolutions since its admission to the world body. It was Cyprus that proposed that the item "Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations" be inscribed on the agenda of the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. That item is again inscribed on the agenda to be discussed in plenary. I think that the time is now ripe to consider seriously the significance of Security Council resolutions in particular and United Nations resolutions in general and as a whole, and to seek ways to ensure their transformation from mere words into deeds. In this regard, it is fitting to refer to the work done to date by the Committee on the United Nations Charter and the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization and to express the view that we should now give serious and effective attention to the work of that most important Committee.

Turning to the rest of the international political scene in this period of transition, a survey of developments yields a similar mixed message of hope and warning.

There is no doubt that the reunification of Germany in early October - in a few days from today - is a landmark event. Only a year ago, the Berlin Wall separated German from fellow German. Families that had been divided since the early 1950s were reunited. The speed with which the changes have taken place is of lightning proportions and we extend our most heartfelt congratulations to the

(President Vassiliou)

people of Germany and our best wishes for every success in addressing the challenges of reunification in which East and West go forward hand in hand.

In Cyprus, we too dream of the day when the military wall of separation is finally dismantled so that Greek and Turkish Cypriots may too go forward hand in hand. This is our dream and guiding force as we approach the marking of the thirtieth anniversary of our independence.

In both Eastern and Western Europe - the epicentre of the historic changes which spelled the end of the Cold War - the process of fundamental and rapid economic and political reforms is gathering momentum. On the one hand, the European Community is moving forward towards a single European market in 1992 and speeding up the process of economic and political integration. On the other, concurrently, the new emerging market economies of Central and Eastern Europe are in turn establishing the economic and political frameworks that will ensure their future prosperity. It is in the interest of the whole world that, when completed, these two processes make President Gorbachev's inspired vision of the Common European House, or the European confederation envisaged by President Mitterrand, a reality.

We all express the hope that the path of democratization that the countries of Eastern Europe have embarked on will not be undermined by the daunting economic problems that face them, nor by the clearly re-emerging nationalistic tendencies that are challenging the very fibre that binds the State as a single actor on the international scene. It is of extreme concern to us all to witness in Europe and in other parts of the world this current upsurge of nationalism based on ethnic, religious, racial or tribal differences. No one here should be in any doubt that if this trend is allowed to fester its spiralling effect will be disastrous. We must recognize and accept that the interests of any one group within a country

(President Vassiliou)

cannot be achieved through the oppression of other groups or the redrawing of the map of the world along sectarian or schismatic lines.

In South Africa, despite the serious problems that continue to exist, the beginning of the end of the abhorrent régime of apartheid has now been signalled by the start of talks between the African National Congress and the South African Government of Mr. de Klerk. We hope that this trend is an irreversible one. In the same region, the past year has seen the historic transition of Namibia to independence, with which a major step was taken towards the reduction of tensions which threatened global stability. Once again, one cannot praise enough the role and work of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in the realization of Namibian independence.

We particularly welcome the decision by the United States and the Soviet Union to work together for a mutually acceptable solution to the problem of Afghanistan, where the continuing civil war, despite the peace accords of 1988, is claiming many lives and causing untold hardships among the proud Afghan people.

We are heartened to note the progress made among the five permanent members of the Security Council in the search for a solution of the Cambodian problem. We welcome the acceptance by all the parties to the conflict of the framework agreement reached by the five for a solution. The envisaged role of the United Nations is again evidence of the new found convergence of views among the five permanent members in the resolution of conflicts and of the importance of the United Nations in their resolution.

We note with concern, however, the lack of progress towards the peaceful resolution of other regional conflicts and disputes. In the Middle East, the Gulf crisis has increased our concern over the interrelated problems of Palestine and Lebanon. The speedy and effective resolution of those problems as a vital element of comprehensive and lasting peace in the region is of particular concern to Cyprus

(President Vassiliou)

and its people. We denounce the continuing oppression of the brave Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Effective negotiations must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We support the establishment of a Palestinian State as well as secure borders for all States in the area.

We continue to deplore the tragedy in Lebanon and the unending suffering of its people. Cyprus remains committed to providing humanitarian assistance to its Lebanese neighbours.

READEX FICHE

(President Vassiliou)

For the sixteenth year, Cyprus stands before this world assembly pleading for its voice to be heard. It has been 16 long years since another invasion and occupation unfolded in the eyes of the world, much like the one we have recently witnessed, and unfortunately the scars of that invasion still remain open.

Cyprus continues to be forcibly divided. Turkish troops continue to occupy about 40 per cent of its land. Thousands of refugees are denied access to their homes and properties. One thousand six hundred nineteen persons are still missing as a result of the Turkish military operations. Our cultural heritage, which has existed for thousands of years and is the common heritage of mankind, is being plundered and obliterated. Furthermore, foreign settlers from Anatolia are still being brought in and settled on Cypriot soil, thus changing its demographic structure. The menace of foreign settlement is also threatening Varosha, a city under the control of the Turkish army since its inhabitants were forcibly expelled during the invasion of 1974.

And all of this is in total disregard of a plethora of resolutions passed not only by this Assembly but by the Security Council as well. Those resolutions clearly and unequivocally call for the reversal of all these acts of flagrant violation of international law. And yet the discouraging chasm between words and deeds today remains as wide as ever.

Many would have given up hope. However, the strengthening of the United Nations and the reinforced expectation of respect for and implementation of its resolutions is a development from which we draw hope. We are also heartened by the statements of world leaders that no peaceful international order is possible if larger States can devour their smaller neighbours, and that we must demonstrate beyond any doubt that aggression cannot and will not pay. If these words are

(President Vassiliou)

transformed into deeds, then we shall finally be able to overcome the ills of aggression and set Cyprus on the course of peace and prosperity for the benefit of the whole of its population.

A just and viable solution to the Cyprus problem necessitates that negotiations are entered into in good faith and are result-oriented. We have, time and time again, displayed our commitment as well as our good will during the course of negotiations. We have presented proposals to the Turkish Cypriot side going far beyond the protection of cultural, religious and linguistic identity, aiming at creating a federation consisting of two regions, one to be administered by the Turkish Cypriot community and the other by the Greek Cypriot community.

Unfortunately, Turkish demands that would have amounted to a permanent partition of Cyprus have, according to the Secretary-General himself, pushed the inter-communal dialogue into an impasse.

Despite the many difficulties, we are resolute in our determination to move out of this impasse. Particularly in today's climate, which favours implementation of United Nations resolutions and the overcoming of divisions, Cyprus cannot be the only exception.

We will persist in our offensive of good will and communication with our Turkish Cypriot fellow-citizens. We shall continue to promote contact and co-operation over whatever barriers or obstacles are placed in our way, convinced that these efforts will contribute to the impetus towards the security of our people and our country in a democratic federation. We will also persevere with our proposals for the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, which will be of benefit not only to the Cypriot people but also to the whole region. No obstacles will derail us from our goal of a united, sovereign, territorially

(President Vassiliou)

integral Cyprus, where freedom, justice and human rights for all Cypriots will not be regarded as a luxury but as the very basis of human existence.

Let me take this opportunity to state in no uncertain terms that we shall continue to afford the Secretary-General our full support and co-operation in his efforts to achieve a breakthrough by way of result-oriented negotiations. Cyprus must not be left to suffer any longer from the catastrophic consequences of the maxim "might means right".

Aside from the political or military oppression of the small by the large, the existence of economic oppression can be just as serious, and its repercussions are just as disastrous. The growing gap between the rich and the poor is a major problem which threatens to act as a time bomb in the foundations of the more peaceful world we are trying to build, unless it is defused in time.

This issue was discussed at length at the special session on international economic co-operation here in New York last spring. The latest World Bank World Development Report shows that more than one billion people in the developing world are currently condemned to live in conditions of destitution, with an income of less than $370, not per day or per week or per month, but per annum. As a result, 40,000 children die every day due to avoidable causes.

The strategy for tackling the problem of development should, I believe, have three facets. First, effective and imaginative measures are required to tackle the developing countries' $1.3 trillion debt problem, combining debt forgiveness, the use of the so-called peace dividend in the form of funds saved from the reduction in military spending as a result of the disarmament process, interest recycling and any other measures which can alleviate the debt burden. And we must not forget that if the Governments will do nothing about the debt problem, then the market forces will take care of it, and the results would not be to their liking.

(President Vassiliou)

Secondly, measures must be taken to improve commodity prices, the low levels of which are directly related to the exacerbation of the debt problem in the 1980s, combined with steps to open up international markets to developing countries' products through the abolition of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. Unfortunately, we have to note that the negotiations for the Uruguay Round are dangerously delayed, and progress will come only as a result of courageous political decisions. But progress is needed.

(President Vassiliou)

Thirdly, incentives must be created to encourage investments which will act as a vehicle for the transfer of technology to the developing countries.

The developing countries must be allowed to share in the benefits of the technological revolution if they are to be able to develop successfully in the increasingly competitive international environment. However, they also have the responsibility of responding to such multilateral action, thereby maximizing the benefits that will accrue from efficient domestic economic policies.

We meet here today against a backdrop of threats to the very survival of our planet. The drive for economic development has brought us to the brink of ecological disaster. The figures are indeed alarming. Since the middle of this century global economic production has increased five-fold and the total world grain production has more than doubled, but not without placing a monumental strain on this planet. In the same period the world's crop-land topsoil has been eroded by 20 per cent; 20 per cent of the world's rain forests has also been destroyed; the ozone layer has been depleted by over 2 per cent world-wide, while tens of thousands of plant and animal species have become extinct.

Effective international action is required now to stem what could become an irreversible tide towards disaster. Sound economic development policies must go in tandem with sound ecological management policies. While recognizing that the responsibility for repairing the damage caused to the Earth's fabric rests with those primarily responsible for causing it, namely the developed countries, we all have a responsibility to shift from development policies that deplete our natural resources to ones that preserve them. The establishment of a global fund for the environment, to which countries on the basis of national income may contribute, could generate funds for nature conservation world-wide and demonstrate our united commitment to dealing with a problem that affects each and every one of us.

(President Vassiliou)

We must remain equally united in our commitment to fighting the global problem of drugs in all its aspects: production, trafficking and use; for, just as the destruction of the environment undermines our fundamental resources in the form of trees, water, the air and the soil, so the drug epidemic continues to undermine our precious natural resource in the form of human beings themselves.

I began by saying that we find ourselves at a crucial turning-point in history. If we rise to the opportunities which have now been opened to us we can take a giant step forward in the direction of a more prosperous, more peaceful world, making the twenty-first century a century of peace, co-operation and achievement. If we succumb to the difficulties and fail to seize this day of opportunity and hope, then we stand to regress to a period of conflict and destruction even more terrible than anything we have already witnessed in this century.

The burden of responsibility is heavily and squarely on our shoulders. What it entails is placing the common good above our own immediate narrow interests; for we must recognize that in the long term that which is to the benefit of the whole international community will also be to the benefit of its individual members.

The crisis in the Gulf; the problems of unequal international economic development and the economic migration that it creates; the issue of environmental conservation; the social problems of drugs and AIDS - all clearly show that none of us can go it alone any longer, and that no one can shut the door on daily occurrences in the rest of the world, for development transcends international barriers in a way that makes isolationism impossible. We must all survive together or perish together. Let us work in the framework of a reinvigorated United Nations to ensure that the world will not perish but survive to become a better place for ourselves and our children.

(President Vassiliou)

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. George Vassiliov, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. DE MICHELIS (Italy): Sir, on taking the floor on behalf of the European Community and its member States I should like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am very happy to do so also because you represent a country with which Italy and the European Community maintain traditional relations of friendship and co-operation. You take up the presidency at a very difficult time of challenge for the United Nations. I am sure that your experience and diplomatic skill will greatly help to ensure a fruitful and constructive forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in the interest of the international community. Let me also express the fullest appreciation of the European Community and its member States to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts in favour of international peace.

I should also like to welcome warmly the admission as a full Member of the United Nations of Liechtenstein, a member of the European family with which the European Community and its member States maintain close and friendly relations. I also warmly welcome the unification of Yemen.

The positions of the European Community and its member States on the problems affecting the international community are fully illustrated in a memorandum which has been circulated today and which forms an integral part of my statement. Let me therefore concentrate here on some crucial aspects of the present situation.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

Perhaps never in the post-war period has the international climate changed so radically from one General Assembly to the next. How different what I have to say on behalf of the European Community is from what I would have said not only one year ago but even just two months ago. This is the first General Assembly of the new world emerging from the lengthy post-war period. It is also the first that it has to deal with a crisis arising after the end of the cold war. We are thus subjected to conflicting feelings of satisfaction at the end of East-West opposition and of concern at a new crisis arising from Iraqi aggression against Kuwait, which gives us a glimpse of new risks and new confrontations.

For the first time a State has been wiped off the map. This has not happened in the Middle East since the end of the Ottoman Empire. The very justification for the aggression is a challenge to international legality and to the political structure in the Middle East. Saddam Hussein claims that all borders in the region were drawn up artificially to divide up the Arab nation and that the time has come for Baghdad to erase them and establish unity by force of arms.

In the developing world in particular, many countries have equally precarious borders, some even more recent than those erased, which are capable of whetting further appetites. Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, claims that other Gulf States, such as Qatar, have no historical legitimacy. If that challenge were to go unanswered, it would herald a period of troubling uncertainty for the international community. We need to have a clear perception of what is at stake in a region politically no less inflammable than the raw material which provides the world with most of the energy it needs.

The Iraqi aggression represents a clear violation of the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, if an irresponsible, aggressive Power succeeds not only by annexation but also by intimidation and threats in deciding

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

the policy of a region which contains 40 per cent of the world's energy resources, this could have repercussions throughout the world in terms, inter alia, of unemployment, inflation and recession - repercussions which would affect most severely the weakest economies and thus the poorest countries of the world.

Our response has been commensurate with our awareness of the gravity of the breach of international law.

The combined opposition of so many countries, beginning with the Arab States, demonstrates the full extent of international protest and reinforces the moral and political authority of the United Nations at a time when there is an ever-growing awareness of the need for an institution of universal scope capable not only of laying down rules but also of ensuring that they are applied and of preventing intimidation, extortion and subjugation.

The world order resulting from the watershed of 1989 and the ensuing redefinition of international relations is not in crisis but is confronted by a very serious challenge. The resolutions of the Security Council are a sign that the international community not only wants to lay down certain rules but also has the means to enforce them. The cold war is really over and with it has vanished the fear that a regional conflict might escalate into an East-West world confrontation. None of our predecessors could have counted on such a certainty.

The decisions of the United Nations create the conditions for Iraq's withdrawal by dint of its strict embargo and the maintenance of a collective response. The sands of the desert and the constant passage of time must neither wear away the broad political and military coalition which has been built up nor undermine the unprecedented unity forged under the banner of the United Nations. Our solidarity is no less important than the validity of our motives: we must not allow timidity, ambiguity or economic shortages to open a breach in our resolve.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The European Community is strengthening its own internal cohesion and extending co-operation eastwards. It warmly welcomes German unification, which, early in October, will fulfil the legitimate aspiration that the German people have cherished for over 40 years. We consider German unification as a positive factor in the development of Europe as a whole and of the Community in particular. It is making all of Europe stronger and more secure, and it will give even greater weight to Community action.

The Twelve are determined to achieve a first agreement in the negotiations on conventional armed forces in Europe and a substantial package of new confidence- and security-building measures in time for the summit of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) to be held in Paris. The signing of a first treaty on conventional forces in Europe will be an essential element for a successful CSCE summit and will also permit negotiations on short-range nuclear forces. The Twelve will strive to ensure that the Paris summit will mark the end of the ideological and military confrontation in Europe and pave the way for building new conditions for peace and stability in Europe based on confidence and co-operation.

We have never been under the illusion that Europe could turn in on itself, that the CSCE could imply a release from needs, tensions and conflicts arising outside Europe, that in our smug satisfaction with our peaceful existence we could ignore the problems of others and the role of the United Nations.

This is demonstrated by the effective and timely response of the Community to the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. It is understandable that the Community should immediately be aware of the gravity of what has happened since Europe's recent history is full of lessons. Europe has learned that aggression must be nipped in the bud and that the victims are most often small, defenceless States.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

It takes note of the fact that Saddam Hussein justifies the annexation of Kuwait by claiming that Middle East borders resulting from previous periods are worth nothing. He cites a principle which is in total contradiction not only with the United Nations Charter but also with that principle - so fundamental for us, contained in the Helsinki Final Act - of respect for borders and of their possible modification only by peaceful means.

The reaction of the Community was the most far-reaching and, perhaps, the swiftest in its history. The Twelve were the first to decide on sanctions. They put their political weight behind their own decisions and the decisions of others to deploy forces. They granted transit facilities and contributed to the adoption of decisions by the United Nations, which remains the fundamental reference point for our action. It is significant that the Community's action in respect of a crisis which has arisen outside the confines of our continent has been overwhelmingly approved by public opinion in Europe.

If the European Community could do nothing but look inwards on itself, it would not have much of a future. However, it intends increasingly to play its role as a new political force with a sense of a long history, political farsightedness and economic might.

This crisis has demonstrated the European Community's ability to mobilize its structure to face an exceptional challenge, but at the same time it has provided an incentive to improve even further the capacity of the Twelve to act unitedly on the world scene, a fact that constitutes a further guarantee of effectiveness for the United Nations. To that end, starting with the conferences to begin in Rome in mid-December on institutional reforms and economic and monetary union, the Twelve have decided to strengthen their common political dimension and to offer a still more effective partnership to others in a world ruled, until a short time ago, by a mutual balance of terror.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

To maintain the general consensus on the sanctions, steadfast international solidarity will be necessary. We all appreciated the promptness with which certain countries increased their oil production to restore the energy balance and the way others, with equal swiftness, re-established the strategic balance in the region.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The West, and first and foremost the Community, is ready to shoulder its part of the burden, material and otherwise, so that the embargo does not fail. After all, how can we build Europe and convert it to interdependence and the market economy if uncertainty continues to paralyse an area of vital interest to the whole continent? One need only think of the energy problems of the newly democratic countries of Eastern Europe.

The implementation of the embargo entails great sacrifices for certain countries. In the framework of broader international action involving other industrialized countries and the main Arab oil producers, the European Community will offer those countries a contribution to cope with the most serious consequences of the crisis. At their meeting in Rome on 7 September the Foreign Ministers of the Community stated their willingness to support Jordan, Turkey and Egypt, the front-line States, and promised to consider the situation of other countries. We do not wish to abandon the poorest nations that are prepared to pay the heavy price of the sanctions.

Collective solidarity must be directed first and foremost to the Arab world. Only with the latter's full assistance will the political, diplomatic and economic isolation of Iraq be effective. No voice has been raised among the Arab States to justify the Iraqi moves. The attempts to call a new holy war have fallen on deaf ears.

Right from the outset of the crisis we have maintained the closest contacts with our main partners in the Arab countries and the Islamic world, and we shall continue to do so. The Community intends to speed up the implementation of the Co-operation Agreement and the negotiation on free trade with the Gulf States in the same spirit. We also intend to pursue the Euro-Arab dialogue with a meeting following up the one in Paris last December.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The European Community considers it vital to continue to seek a political solution, thus avoiding imperilling by mistake or lack of patience the new order emerging thanks to the newly acquired strength of the United Nations. With the contribution of various countries it has been possible to set up a strategic shield to prevent the conflict from spreading. We also appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convince Iraq to put an end to a unanimously condemned violation. The waiting game will be won by the side with the staunchest determination to stand by the decisions taken, be they political, economic or military. By strictly complying with the resolutions of the Security Council, and by strengthening them appropriately, the international community will undoubtedly come out as the winning side.

In that respect, I should like to recall that the European Community and its member States have consistently advocated the adoption of measures aimed at extending control of the implementation of the embargo against Iraq to air traffic. They therefore welcome the resolution the Security Council may adopt today on this subject.

However, the price of this broad consensus must not be ineffectiveness and the price of compromise must not be injustice. The region we are talking about is on the borders of Europe and we are all endeavouring to see that the option of a settlement wins through. This must not entail compromises that violate the basic principles contained in the resolutions of the United Nations.

The search for a settlement can succeed only to the extent that we are steadfast in dissuading, and determined to isolate, Iraq. Only firmness can open the way to such a settlement and prevent the start of a devastating conflagration. Remarking on the Munich Conference, Winston Churchill observed bitterly that the democracies had chosen dishonour to avoid war and in the end they had both war and

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

dishonour. The lesson is still true. Today too firmness and dissuasive action are necessary to force the aggressor to back down and to prevent an armed conflict. They are also necessary when a dictator tries to shield himself with innocent hostages to stay our hand.

The Foreign Ministers of the Twelve pointed out clearly that each member State would consider all Community nationals detained in Iraq and Kuwait as its own citizens, and stated that they held the Iraqis individually responsible for their safety. Our intention was thereby to introduce an innovation into international practice that would not be without consequences. With the precedent of Nuremberg particularly in mind, we thus reinforced the idea of individual responsibility in international affairs.

We must prepare ourselves for a siege, which could be lengthy, to achieve the objectives of forcing Iraq to withdraw to its own borders, obtaining the release of all the hostages and restoring Kuwait's independence.

The consensus that has arisen in respect of this serious and dramatic act of agression must provide an impetus for resolving other crises and must confirm our commitment to eliminate other political injustices and promote the economic well-being of the region.

Saddam Hussein has brought his country to the brink of disaster after bleeding it white in eight years of war. He has ripped apart the fragile fraternity of the Arab world. He has made more difficult the search, which we must continue tenaciously, for a historic understanding between the Arabs and the West, between the Islamic and the Western worlds. However, the Middle East goes on in a desperately precarious state. One cannot put out one fire that has broken out, however threatening and serious it is, and let the other blaze away in the occupied territories and in Lebanon.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The military units deployed in the Saudi Arabian desert and the warships patrolling the Gulf are an effective response, but they cannot replace a policy of reducing more general tensions and instability. A solution of the current crisis that is not followed up by the drafting of guidelines for future political and economic action in the Middle East could be letters drawn in the sand, soon to be blown away and forgotten.

The European Community has been firm and consistent in its contribution to the search for a solution to the conflict in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). That is and continues to be our policy, unwavering in recognizing that the solution lies in the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and in that of the State of Israel to exist within secure, guaranteed borders. Just as action was being stepped up to initiate dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians, and as the international community was becoming increasingly alarmed at the intolerable situation in the occupied territories, the Iraqi aggression took place and has delayed the search for a solution. The Community's policy nevertheless remains the same and it will not be diverted by the present crisis from the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution based on the aforementioned principles.

Lebanon, until recently one of the most successful models of religious tolerance in the Middle East, continues to tear itself apart. The European Community considers that only the implementation of the Taif agreements can help in the process of national reconciliation.

Over and above these present grave crises, the time has also come to begin reflecting on the introduction in the Middle East of a collective system capable of guaranteeing stability, security, economic and social development, and recognition of the rights of all peoples. In Helsinki Presidents Bush and Gorbachev raised the

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

possibility of a new order of peace, a commitment to work together with the countries in the area and outside to develop regional-security structures and measures to encourage stability and peace.

In other words, without wishing to transfer the model of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) - which has shown itself to be so effective in our continent - in toto across the Mediterranean, we consider that it would be worth endeavouring to introduce in that area principles and measures capable of reducing military imbalances, which are in general the prelude to other military adventures, curbing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, encouraging economic and social progress, and fostering the peaceful coexistence of different cultures and civilizations.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The first test has shown that the new world order works positively, but the serious problems of a social and economic order that threaten international stability are far from being resolved, and in some cases are even more disturbing. They require the momentum that can gather only within the United Nations, since of all problems they are most universal in origin and most widespread.

We are witnessing the war that all countries, but most especially certain Latin American States, are waging against drugs. This problem threatens our societies and our younger generations, and creates spontaneous solidarity between Governments. The history of mankind knows no other scourge that has so permeated all regions of the world - affecting rich and poor countries alike, and overwhelming both the wealthy and the underprivileged. The Community intends to step up international co-operation on this problem. It will assist in the joint strategy, under the aegis of the United Nations, to control drugs production, manufacturing and trafficking, as well as the use to which the profits are put, by involving the banking system. Demand reduction is a main objective of the European Community and its member States.

In the same vein, the emergence of intolerant forms of religious fanaticism and the uncontrolled flows of migrants, which affect industrial societies, stem essentially from conditions that deprive a large proportion of mankind of the cultural and material resources needed for a decent life. The problem of development will inevitably weigh increasingly on a world witnessing the disappearance of the most manifest and dangerous confrontation of the post-war period.

The Community intends neither to withdraw into its own well-being, which is based on openness to other economies, nor to reduce its commitment towards the countries in the third world on account of its co-operation with Eastern Europe.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The Community will encourage regional integration, in particular within the framework of its reviewed Mediterranean policy. We are also convinced that it is for us to create a macro-economic context favourable to growth and development through enhanced devolution of resources, which, however, must go hand in hand with domestic policies capable of promoting, alongside State initiatives, not only individual initiative but also respect for human rights. No external assistance may, in fact, compensate for ineffective national policies, as has been shown by the experience of the last decade.

Development and environmental protection appear increasingly to be a facet of the world's interdependence. We cannot expect four fifths of humanity to go on living in the present conditions and at the same time hope that this will not have intolerable repercussions on man's capacity to live in harmony with nature. We cannot worry about tropical forests and look on impassively as many countries come to grips with a debt that precludes any possibility of development. In this connection, the conclusions at which Mr. Bettino Craxi has arrived in the work with which he was entrusted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations provide many lessons. Many countries in the Community have already granted substantial reductions in debt, but this is not enough. The problem of the middle-income countries, particularly those facing severe economic-reconstruction programmes, must be tackled with special attention. Thought must be given to a new range of options in the framework of the Paris Club.

The Community considers that the strengthening of the multilateral trade system provides the best guarantee of international equilibrium and of sustainable development. The successful conclusion, before the end of the year, of the Uruguay Round is all the more important against the background of the present crisis. It is a unique opportunity to achieve balanced and substantial progress in all fields of the ongoing negotiations.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The United Nations has granted legitimacy to an unprecedented joint intervention. It is henceforward possible to perceive coexistence no longer hampered by the shackles of the cold war. A form of world management, at least of the crises most likely to have destabilizing effects, is taking shape. The consensus reached to counter the Iraqi aggression must be preserved to take up other challenges. The spirit of this approach is already being put to use in the possible settlement of other conflicts, such as that in Cambodia. The agreement between the opposing parties on a transitional administrative arrangement, an end to hostilities, and free and fair elections within the framework agreed by the five permanent members of the Security Council will have the political and material support of the Community.

The opportunity must be seized to apply in full the principles of the Charter to the peaceful settlement of other unsolved problems, such as that of Cyprus. The principle of universality is also of the utmost importance. For instance, the absence of the two Koreas is a vestige of the confrontation of yesteryear. We must prepare to welcome both, particularly as they wish to start off on a new footing in their mutual relations.

The United Nations is the first major attempt to democratize the international system - that is to say, to apply to relations between sovereign States the principles on which the rule of law is based. Those principles, whose solemn rebirth Europe has witnessed in the last year, are now gaining ground in all societies. Other barriers are falling, with peace-bringing, innovative effects - beginning with that most odious barrier that has so far denied the majority of the population in South Africa their rights and dignity. The Community offers its support to all those, regardless of their colour, who are joining forces to build a new South Africa free of apartheid and of all other forms of discrimination. We are following this process very attentively, with a view to adjusting the

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

Community's stand with regard to its developments, and we shall continue to spare no effort to contribute to its successful conclusion.

Nothing convinces us more than do the latest events of the role that the United Nations is increasingly called upon to play in favour of justice and freedom. The European Community wishes to mobilize the growing cohesion between its members and the whole weight of its moral, political and economic force to support the United Nations with a view to achieving these objectives.

I have so far expressed the views of the Community and its member States. Let me now conclude my intervention by adding a few remarks on behalf of my own country.

One further lesson of this crisis and the conclusion that we draw from the end of the post-cold war period prompt us to reflect on the need to adjust the structure and the functioning of the United Nations to the new reality of the international scene.

In the past, the abuse of the exercise of the right of veto has too often paralysed the capacity of the United Nations to put an end to the gravest crises. Today, the outlines of a possible new scenario are emerging, with the United Nations as the focal point in a world at last free of the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust. This compels us, as well, to review the way the United Nations operates at a time not just no longer that of the immediate post-war period - and I am thinking, inter alia, of the reference to the status of the former enemy Powers - but no longer even that of the cold war.

Moreover, considering the progress so far achieved in European integration, thought should also be given, in my view, to institutional adjustments, within the United Nations, capable of granting a more visible role to an entity like the European Community, which Italy wants to see endowed with supranational structures for conducting foreign policy, in the interests of the United Nations and in the interests of peace in the world.

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on your election to the high post which you occupy. This is not only a tribute to your very great personal qualities but also an acknowledgement of the role of Malta in international affairs. I must also express our special gratitude to the unflagging efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar. His inexhaustible faith in the capabilities of the Organization, his perseverance and his capacity for innovation have done much to enhance the authority of the Organization. The Soviet delegation agrees with the basic ideas contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization for the past year.

Lastly, we wish sincerely to welcome the delegation of the Principality of Liechtenstein and congratulate it on the admission of that country to the United Nations. We shall co-operate with it in all spheres.

From the exceptional vantage point of this forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, one might look back in amazement at how strikingly the terrain we have covered in just one year differs from the familiar landscape of the preceding four decades and more. Politically, this has been not just a calendar year but a light-year in the history of the world. The "cold war", with its accompanying stress, psychoses and anticipation of disaster, is no longer a part of our life. Gone is the strain of daily confrontation, propaganda squabbles and reciprocal threats.

This has been a year during which pieces of the Berlin wall were popular souvenirs. And now there is no longer a physical division of Europe, and a final line has been drawn under the Second World War. The unification of the two German States is being completed. The "German question", that "great" and "classical" problem of world politics which only yesterday seemed intractable, has been

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

resolved calmly and to mutual satisfaction. On behalf of the Soviet people, of all Soviet citizens, I wish to offer our sincere and heartfelt congratulations to the German people, the German nation, on this tremendous event in the history of that State and of that people and in the history of Europe.

Almost imperceptibly, the military blocs have lost their enemies. They are beginning to build their relations on a new basis, moving away from confrontation, which is being eroded by disarmament, by reductions in defence spending, by the expansion of confidence-building measures and by the emergence of collective and co-operative security structures.

Unprecedented progress has been made in the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts by political means. In southern Africa, the United Nations plan for the granting of independence to Namibia has been implemented. The situation concerning Nicaragua has been settled, and a dynamic search for peace is under way in Cambodia, Afghanistan and other hot spots of the globe. We should not forget Angola, Ethiopia, Cyprus, the Korean peninsula and Western Sahara. All this is being done with the most active participation of the United Nations.

These positive changes in the world, we can say without exaggeration, have been propelled by the new nature of the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, which are evolving from co-operation to interaction and partnership. The meetings of the Presidents of the super-Powers in Malta, Camp David and Helsinki have been major events in world politics.

The political environment is being clearly defined by the world-wide recognition of the supremacy of universal human values. Democratic forms are becoming consolidated in running the affairs of States and in the conduct of international affairs.

The United Nations, too, is being reborn. We are pleased to note that the ideas of President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union concerning the role of the

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Organization in a changing world have been found to be in harmony with majority opinion and with the demands of real life.

The central concepts of today's politics are co-operation, interaction and partnership in solving extremely severe global problems, such as economic backwardness, poverty, social inequality and environmental protection.

Had this session taken place before August 1990, we should have had every reason to say that mankind had emerged from a narrow and dangerous passage and had wide and glowing horizons ahead of it.

But now our field of vision has been obscured by the dark cloud of the aggression against Kuwait. On that "Black Thursday", Iraq flagrantly violated the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law, the universally recognized norms of morality and the standards of civilized behaviour. Iraq has committed an unprovoked act of aggression, has annexed a neighbouring sovereign State, has seized thousands of hostages and is resorting to unprecedented blackmail, threatening to use weapons of mass destruction.

There is also another dimension to Iraq's action. It is a blow directed essentially against all that mankind has recently achieved, all that we have been able to accomplish together by adopting the new political thinking in determining our future.

An act which one can unquestionably describe without exaggeration as an act of terrorism has been perpetrated against the emerging new world order. This is a major affront to mankind. Unless we find a way to respond to it and deal with the situation, civilization will be set back half a century.

Iraq's actions are having and will have the gravest consequences for the Iraqi people itself and for millions of men, women and children in many countries of the world, for their hopes and their future. A large-scale war may break out in the Persian Gulf region any day, at any hour.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

From this rostrum, we should like to appeal once again to the leaders of Iraq. We are making this appeal as their old friends and as a country that has found the courage to condemn its own wrongdoings against certain States in the past. We call upon them to change their thinking and to obey the demands not only of law but also of common sense, to take a responsible and humane attitude, above all towards the Iraqi people, who, we are convinced, yearn for peace, tranquillity and good relations with their neighbours.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We also trust that at this time of grave trial the Arab peoples and States will live up to the hopes of mankind and help to find a way out of the Persian Gulf crisis. This would make it possible to deal with other hotbeds of conflict in the Middle East and at last to find an equitable solution to the Palestine problem.

If the world has survived to this day, it is because at tragic moments in its history the forces of evil were always opposed by the forces of good, arbitrary power by the rule of law, treachery and baseness by honour and decency, and violence by strength of spirit and faith in justice.

Today is no time for rejoicing, but one cannot help feeling a certain satisfaction at the unprecedented unity of the Security Council and at international public opinion's unequivocal assessment of Iraq's behaviour. This gives us confidence in the ability of the United Nations to deal with this grave international crisis. As is clear from the positions taken by Members of the Organization, the Security Council has a mandate to go as far as the interests of world peace require. I have no doubt that today's meeting, on which agreement has already been reached, will again demonstrate the unity and determination of our collective organ, the Security Council, in such situations.

Some may think that Iraq is being judged by a different standard, one higher than that applied to other countries even in the quite recent past. My answer is this: it is good that we have reached this point. It is a good thing that we have adopted a universal human yardstick of good and evil, that we have started calling aggression by its proper name and consider it necessary to condemn and punish its perpetrator and to help the victims of injustice.

These days are a trying time, a test for the Organization. If it passes this test it will immeasurably enhance its prestige, gain new experience and new capabilities. There is no doubt that it will make use of them to promote the restoration of peace and justice in other conflict situations and to ensure the

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

implementation of its resolutions bearing on all the regional problems to which reference was made by previous speakers.

An approach based on mankind's common interest does not permit any other course of action. From now on the world community intends to act by a single set of standards.

International relations are being freed from the vestiges of the "cold war" which for many years had a negative effect on the world's legal order. We are again becoming united nations and are returning to our own global constitution - the Charter of the United Nations - to those of its provisions which were forgotten for a while but which experience has proved to be indispensable for the most important and most necessary of our tasks, the maintenance of international peace and security. The establishment of the principles of new thinking in world politics has enabled us to start implementing the effective measures of persuasion and enforcement provided for in the Charter.

In the context of recent events, I should like to remind those who regard aggression as an acceptable form of behaviour that the United Nations has the authority to take measures for "the suppression of acts of aggression". There is already ample evidence that that right can be exercised.

Of course, before that - and I reiterate "before that" - all political, peaceful, non-military forms of pressure must be exerted on the aggressor, obviously in combination with economic and other enforcement measures.

In a way, the Persian Gulf crisis is not only a tragedy and a dangerous threat to peace but also a serious challenge to all of us to review the ways and means of maintaining security on our planet, the methods of protecting law and order, the machinery for controlling the processes which affect the state of human civilization, in the broadest sense of the term, and the role of the United Nations.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

It cannot be otherwise in today's world. Only in this way can we make the period of peace lasting and irreversible and follow up on our initial success in bringing about a healthier climate in international relations.

Life poses new tasks. What will be needed first and foremost is, in our view, an effort to gain a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the political, military, technological, economic, ecological, humanitarian and cultural realities of the modern world and of its human dimension. The world is becoming consolidated around universal human values. Partnership is replacing rivalry. On this basis, relationships are being built among many countries that once looked upon each other as adversaries and rivals.

Partnership is not merely a fashionable term. It became evident during the latest crisis and underlay the close and constructive interaction among the permanent members of the Security Council. But the decline of East-West rivalry as a real or perceived factor in international relations may bring new figures and new phenomena to the arena of world politics. One such phenomenon we shall probably have to deal with is that of claims to regional hegemony.

Among the issues assuming a critical importance for the future of mankind are the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and missile technologies and, more generally, the disproportionate growth of the military sector in the economies and lives of some countries or States. Even in the past the doctrines of the "balance of terror" and "nuclear deterrence" were questionable means of maintaining the security of the world. In the new conditions of today they have simply become irrelevant.

We need to define the criteria of defence sufficiency. After the Iraqi aggression it would seem difficult to talk about this. After all, what can be sufficient in the face of the irrational? On the other hand, this aggression has once again underscored the validity of the argument that no country should have the

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

exclusive prerogative or absolute freedom to determine its own level of armament. Any other approach would result in an unbridled arms race and all-out militarization. We must look towards different principles, towards accommodation to the concerns of others and towards a balance of armaments at the lowest possible levels.

We in the Soviet Union have the unfortunate experience of having built up an excessive military capability, and we know very well what that costs. This was due more to an erroneous assessment of the situation and a desire to protect the country against any eventuality than to any evil intent or aggressiveness. At the time, we and our rivals took an unduly "arithmetical" approach to the concept of military parity. Of course, parity is needed for global stability, but it should not go beyond the limits of reasonable defence needs.

We have drawn and continue to draw appropriate conclusions for ourselves. It is now common knowledge that militarization is wasteful for any country and can be ruinous when taken to extremes.

In the longer term, the world community will need to monitor the military power of States, arms supplies and transfers of military technology. Such an approach will be in everyone's interests and will strengthen stability and trust. Otherwise we shall constantly be confronted with armed conflicts and attempts at intimidation and blackmail.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Above all, it will be necessary to keep a close watch on those countries that are making determined efforts to build up the offensive capabilities of their armed forces; we must not only observe what they are doing but also call upon them to explain why it is being done and why it is necessary.

Of course the United Nations itself will have to play the primary role in this. But the Organization will need effective support from regional security structures, which are already becoming a reality in Europe and which we hope will emerge in Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East, in Central America and elsewhere in the world.

We might consider the idea of introducing at the global and regional levels the international registration of certain types of armaments that are produced or acquired. There is unquestionably a need for transparency in this area.

We need to agree on principles governing the sale and supply of arms. Such attempts were made in the past, but unfortunately they were not carried through to their logical conclusion.

In our view, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament must be urgently requested to address this issue and to submit recommendations to the General Assembly at its next session.

Two years ago the Soviet delegation raised the issue of reactivating the work of the Security Council's Military Staff Committee. Recent developments convince us of the need to return to the original idea conceived by the creators of this Organization and of its Charter.

We know why the Military Staff Committee has never become a functioning body. During the "cold war" the Committee did not and could not have a role to play. Now, however, we see that without substantive recommendations from that body the Security Council is unable to carry out its functions under the Charter.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The architects of our Organization proceeded from the harsh realities of the Second World War and were right in assuming that if the Organization was to be effective in keeping the peace and preventing war, it must have the means to enforce its decisions and, if necessary, to suppress aggression and must also have machinery for the preparation and co-ordination of such actions.

The Soviet delegation believes that the Security Council must take the necessary organizational steps to be able to act in strict conformity with the provisions of the Charter.

It should begin by initiating steps to reactivate the work of the Military Staff Committee and to study the practical aspects of assigning national military contingents to serve under the authority of the Council.

The Soviet Union is prepared to conclude an appropriate agreement with the Security Council. We are sure that the other permanent members of the Council and States that might be approached by it will do the same.

If the Military Staff Committee had worked properly, if appropriate agreements had been concluded between the Council and its permanent members and if other organizational aspects of countering threats to peace had been worked out, there would now be no need for individual States to act unilaterally. After all, however justified they might be, such actions provoke a mixed response, create problems for those States themselves and may not be acceptable to all.

By contrast, there is no reason to object to actions taken by the legitimate international "law-enforcement bodies" - the Security Council and the Military Staff Committee.

We also should not underestimate even the psychological effect of the Security Council's acquiring structures and forces to counter aggression.

I should like to emphasize that the use of force is possible only as a last resort. We must rely on non-military, political means and pursue our objectives in

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

a peaceful manner. Today more than ever before, it is these methods that are becoming effective.

The latest crisis has dramatically illustrated the importance of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

To be frank, the situation is becoming most alarming. Let us face it: cracks have appeared in the nuclear non-proliferation régime; difficulties are being encountered in expanding the zone of application of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is time to trigger the emergency systems and face the question in all seriousness in order to save the situation. As a matter of the utmost urgency, nuclear tests have to be stopped. If testing is stopped, we have a chance to survive; otherwise the world will perish. I have no doubt whatever about this. We need to tell people about this frankly, without taking refuge in all sorts of specious arguments. Perhaps we should invite the parliaments of all countries to express their attitude regarding nuclear explosions and nuclear tests. We could organize a world-wide parliamentary referendum.

What else has to happen in order to set in motion at long last the elimination of chemical weapons? The process must be completed by the conclusion of a convention. The Soviet Union and the United States are setting an example by doing this on a bilateral basis. But what about the others? It is really odd that while there is no person, no politician who would publicly call for retaining toxic agents, things are essentially at a standstill and we still have no convention.

Perhaps we should ask for a roll-call vote here in this General Assembly Hall and see who votes against the proposal? If everyone is in favour, it will be a simple matter to set up a binding schedule for completing work on the Convention and to establish a time-frame for the destruction of chemical weapons. Similar problems, mostly concerning verification, arise with regard to biological weapons.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Swift and decisive action is needed on all these issues. Yet the debate at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, let us honestly admit, proceeds in a calm and leisurely manner. Can we accept this? Even as dangerous developments are gaining critical momentum in the world, the Geneva negotiations are continuing at a pace that was set at the time of the "cold war".

I think the negotiators at the Palais des Nations at Geneva should roll up the blinds. Let them see what is going on outside and let people know what our disarmament pundits are meditating upon.

I do not want to offend anyone. I know that those working there are honourable people. But what is to be done? The time has come to cry out, to act decisively and firmly.

I cannot fail to mention yet another aspect of security.

The world community should also consider the possibility of various "unconventional situations" arising from the mass taking of hostages and cases of blackmail with threats of the use of particularly dangerous and destructive weapons.

These problems will have to be addressed at two levels: technical and legal. We could start by setting up a group of experts for special contingencies under the auspices of the Security Council.

The group could include outstanding anti-terrorism experts, psychologists, nuclear scientists, chemists, physicians, disaster-relief organizers, experts on the physical protection of facilities, and the like.

Recommendations concerning the management of "unconventional situations" should be made known to a limited number of people. The Security Council may find it necessary, upon recommendation of the Military Staff Committee, to establish a rapid-response force to be formed on a contract basis from units specially designated by different countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council. This idea also deserves consideration and discussion.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

But technical methods alone are not enough to deal with such things. In our view, it is extremely important to institute a new norm in international law which would declare that any person who threatens to use weapons of mass destruction for purposes of blackmail, to take hostages or to engage in mass terror is guilty of a crime against humanity. Work on this has been under way for a long time somewhere in the labyrinths of this Organization, but its end is not yet in sight.

What we need, however, is to create, as soon as possible, a moral and legal environment in which anyone guilty of grave crimes against humanity, of participating in acts of mass repression, hostage-taking, terrorist acts or torture, and those guilty of particular cruelty in the use of force, could not escape punishment and would not be absolved from personal responsibility even if he acted under orders.

The principle of suppressing aggression and threats to peace should, in our view, be complemented by the principle of individual responsibility and by commensurate punishment.

The Persian Gulf crisis is causing major dislocations in the entire system of the world economy, as other speakers have pointed out. Their full magnitude is difficult even to assess at present. It is clear that the consequences will be severe for the economies of the developing countries, particularly the poorest ones. Merely stating this is not enough; action must be taken without delay. It is necessary to establish, as soon as possible, an international mechanism, even if only a temporary one, for example, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank, to mitigate the adverse consequences of this crisis for countries which are in a particularly vulnerable position. We are of the view that sounding out the economic repercussions of the crisis should be primarily the function of the United Nations; the Organization should be the centre of action in situations affecting the interests of many countries.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

History, particularly modern history, teaches all kinds of lessons. They must not be ignored or underestimated. One of them is that security can hardly be lasting unless it is supported by economic growth combined with spiritual health and by traditional cultural values combined with new technologies and with a concern for the environment. Co-operation in the 1990s must therefore be geared to the resolution of the entire set of global economic and environmental problems. A new "poverty curtain", this time between North and South, must not be allowed to descend. If it does, the resulting division of the world may prove fatal to our civilization. We have no time to lose. A global strategy for development and for solving problems common to all mankind is needed now, and the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization rightly makes this point. The United Nations, supported by its specialized agencies and by outside intellectual resources, should set about formulating such a strategy.

An interdependent world calls for a new level of multilateral economic partnership. Co-operation on a bilateral basis and in selected areas is no longer enough; it is global co-operation that is needed.

The special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation clearly showed that everybody would gain if each group of countries were to adjust its approaches and show willingness to forsake individual or group self-interest in economic co-operation, setting as its highest priority the interests of the common good, a global self-interest, if you will, which would no longer be selfish. We welcome the provisions of the Declaration of the special session which support the integration of the Soviet Union and East European countries into the world economy. We hope that the United Nations will give concrete expression to its support for this process.

The Soviet contribution to these efforts will certainly be growing as we move ahead with perestroika at home, deepen our economic reform and change over to a

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

market economy. We have firmly opted for a closer association with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), IMF, the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with a view to joining them as soon as the necessary internal and external conditions are established. It is true that we are rather late, but none the less we have come to a firm position on this very important matter.

We also see a unique contribution that we can make to the development of international co-operation. For geographical and other reasons, we are in a better position than others to serve as a link between Europe and Asia and to contribute to the establishment of a single Eurasian space in the economic, scientific, technological, environmental and other spheres. This will certainly be facilitated, for instance, by Soviet transport systems, main lines already in existence, and communications equipment, including space communications.

Scientific and technological progress has become a major factor shaping the world's future. The global nature of its implications places in a new perspective the need to co-ordinate the policies of States in this area. The United Nations and its system of organizations can and must, in our view, assume a leading role in these efforts.

This is an area in which trust among States is of special importance. Without trust, barriers to international scientific and technical co-operation cannot be dismantled. We think that the international community should take a stand against monopolism in the field of science and technology. Otherwise, it will be difficult to deal effectively with underdevelopment and the many problems of the developing world. If we succeeded in strongly focusing the global development strategy on scientific and technological progress, we could substantially mitigate such alarming trends as the brain drain, the growing migration of professionals, and the rising cost and narrowing scope of research. The United Nations would do well to

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

take the lead in organizing a global forum on the role of thought, science and technology in addressing the problems of today's world. The Soviet Union is prepared to take the initiative in holding a major international forum of this kind in our country.

Much has been said lately on environmental issues. We even run the risk of talking away our future, for up to now - I emphasize that this is at the global level - there has been much talk but little action, while the destruction of the environment is outstripping our preparations to deal with the environmental threat.

I hope that even as we continue to prepare for the 1992 Conference on the Environment and Development in Brazil, we shall be able to start implementing specific environmental protection projects. In our view, one of the priority measures would be to establish a United Nations centre for emergency environmental assistance. We have submitted to the Secretary-General a list of Soviet scientists and specialists whom, at the request of the centre, we would be ready to send to areas of environmental disasters at our own expense to serve as members of international expert teams.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

We are well aware that a healthy environment requires considerable investment at both the national and the global level. As we see it, the way out of the problem is reduction of military expenditure and conversion of military production. There is no alternative. The figures are well known. Eight hundred billion dollars must be spent before the end of this century to avert environmental degradation and destruction - almost the same amount as is spent by the world for military purposes each year.

The urgency of environmental-protection problems has been highlighted by the Chernobyl tragedy.

We are grateful to the Governments and the various agencies which are joining in the hard work of dealing with the consequences of the disaster. On behalf of the Soviet people, I also wish to express our gratitude to all international, governmental and public organizations and private citizens who have offered their help to the victims.

Our special thanks go to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and to those countries and organizations that have shown such a touching interest in Chernobyl's children, inviting them to come for rest and medical treatment and gladdening the hearts of the children with their concern and their warmth. The Secretary-General's decision to designate a Special Representative for Chernobyl disaster relief has also been greatly appreciated in our country.

The multi-dimensional approach to security supported by our Organization brings into focus the interrelationship between the security of States and the well-being and freedom of the individual. The human being is coming to the fore and the human dimension is becoming a universal yardstick for any international undertaking. For us and for the United Nations the security of the individual, of

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

every citizen, and the protection of fundamental human rights are inseparable from national security and from international security as a whole.

I think the time has also come to look at regional conflicts from the standpoint of human rights. Those rights include the right to life and personal safety, as well as the right to enjoy fundamental freedoms and to participate in the democratic processes of one's society and one's State.

The main task for the international community is to create conditions in which people would be able to make a free choice. Disputes must be settled not in the trenches of war but through the ballot-box, both regionally and within the individual countries and States.

Speaking about the future, we should also like to respond to those who have been following with understandable concern the developments in our country. True, our domestic situation is not at all simple and is still far from stable. We can readily understand that concern: ours is an enormous country, with enormous potential, and the stability of the Soviet Union has a great influence on the state of the world.

But whatever the complexity of our situation, one cannot fail to see that it is evolving against the background of the emancipation of all the peoples and all the citizens of our country, their active involvement in the political arena and the reaffirmation of their national identities. They are opening themselves to the world, and the world is discovering them.

That this process is accompanied by some difficulties and even some costs should not cause excessive alarm, because the Soviet people and the democratic forces that are assuming responsibility for the future of our Union are aware of the Soviet Union's place in the world and of its responsibility for the maintenance of global stability. This awareness is shared by all the peoples of our

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

multinational country, and they will all act responsibly, realizing that stability in the world will also mean peace in their own home.

In working for the renewal of our society, we have seen how important it is to defend democratic principles at all levels domestically and internationally.

I should like to say in particular that if attempts to embark on the path of democracy were to end in failure or, worse still, in collapse, it would have grave consequences for the world's future, not to mention the risk of chaos and new dictatorships. Preventing that should be in everyone's interest.

As we meet for the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, we are speaking not so much of the Organization's maturity as of the beginning of its rebirth, its restoration according to the blueprints of 1945. Wiping off the grime left by the "cold war", we see a work of collective wisdom. The United Nations was conceived as an instrument of action. Henceforth, we must all ensure that our words are bound to joint - and I emphasize "joint" - actions. Now is the time precisely for that. The philosophy of today is a philosophy of action.

This is the sixth time that I have spoken from this rostrum and participated in the work of the General Assembly. It has certainly been a great school, a first-rate school. Where else can one become so closely involved with the entire gamut of human problems and encounter such a constellation of personalities, intellectuals, professionals and scholars, whose brilliant qualities are epitomized by the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Perez de Cuellar?

I consider myself very fortunate to have met and worked here with outstanding political leaders and great personalities during the years when the United Nations returned to being what it was meant to be - a centre for harmonizing the activities of nations.

Mr. BOULARES (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a pleasure for me to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the current session and success in the accomplishment of your noble mission.

We are completely convinced of your success, knowing as we do your outstanding qualities, your long experience and your continued efforts in the service of justice and peace.

This election is a tribute by the international community to your friendly country, Malta, for the important role it plays within the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and on the Mediterranean and international scene.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

The Tunisian delegation will be pleased to co-operate closely with you during your presidency of this session in order to attain the objectives for which our dynamic organization is working.

It is also a pleasure for me to extend to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba, representative of fraternal Nigeria to the United Nations, our best wishes and appreciation for the great competence with which he presided over our last session and the considerable efforts that he made to resolve our problems with wisdom and effectiveness.

It is also a special pleasure for me to take this opportunity to express directly to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our profound esteem for the commendable efforts that he unceasingly makes so generously in the service of peace the world over and for the implementation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations in international relations.

I am also pleased to extend a welcome, on behalf of my delegation, to the Principality of Liechtenstein. This admission supports the universality of the United Nations, the world forum of all countries large or small at this time when the concept of international solidarity is being strengthened.

While the last session witnessed a number of positive developments which aroused optimism and reassurance that the world would continue to evolve toward stronger understanding, the difficult context in which the present session is being held is a source of concern and disquiet, because of the crisis which is developing dangerously in the Gulf region.

The present escalation of this crisis is the harbinger of the gravest of threats to security and peace in the region and in the world at large. This is why we wish to give it our complete attention before referring to the many successes achieved by the United Nations in different fields, thanks to the combined efforts of its members.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

Tunisia has voiced its profound concern about this crisis from the very beginning. It was our hope that the two parties to the conflict might arrive at a solution to the dispute through dialogue and negotiations, given the relations of fraternity and good-neighbourliness that bind them. Unfortunately however, the situation quickly became complicated and assumed considerable proportions, due to military escalation, the fact that the dispute spilled over to neighbouring countries and the intervention of certain States from outside the region.

Tunisia has made tireless efforts to contribute to the containment of the crisis because of the privileged relations that it has with both the fraternal countries, Iraq and Kuwait and because it belongs to the Arab Muslim world and is profoundly committed to international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as well as that of the League of Arab States, primary among which are the non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the commitment to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and the non-threat or use of force in the settlement of disputes between States.

In all its endeavours, Tunisia has sought to confine the conflict within its Arab context, in the belief that widening the scope of the conflict would jeopardize the search for a peaceful solution. We believe that if an Arab solution to the conflict had been given a real chance, many of the subsequent complications, such as the landing of foreign forces on Arab soil could have been avoided, and we would thus have been spared the emotional impact that the crisis has had on Arab and Muslim peoples and the threat of a war that could break out at any time and that would be detrimental to the region regardless of its outcome. Furthermore, international relations and the economic situation would undoubtedly be influenced by this war which might break out.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

In spite of the difficulties of the present situation and the complexity of inter-Arab relations, it is still our belief that there exists a chance of finding a solution to this crisis within a strictly Arab context. Such a chance should not be overlooked: it exits and it is necessary.

On this basis, and in an attempt to contribute effectively to resolving the crisis, Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, stepped up contacts and consultations with many fraternal and friendly heads of State. He received a number of special envoys from the two countries directly concerned and emissaries from many other Arab and non-Arab heads of State. He also sent special envoys to the two Arab States directly concerned, the permanent members of the Security Council, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the leaders of the European community, with messages and concrete proposals that might constitute the framework of a solution in accordance with international legality and based on the following principles: release of civilians being held in Iraq and Kuwait; withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait; replacement of foreign forces by Arab forces; guaranteeing the security for all the States of the Gulf; resolving the vital problems that led to the crisis; resolving the problems of the Middle East and the Arab nation, which the international community has not yet been able to deal with, because it has not been able to implement numerous United Nations resolutions that it was adopted thus far.

Tunisia still pursues the path of peaceful solution. Our President has sent the Tunisian Prime Minister as envoy to President Saddam Hussein, with specific proposals, in search of a window of opportunity in this grave situation. We hope that those proposals could be implemented in response to the need for harmony among peoples and the imperatives of peace and security in the region. We note with satisfaction the favourable reception of those proposals. We take this opportunity

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

to reaffirm our adherence to the Security Council resolutions concerning the Gulf crisis. In this respect, we have submitted a report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We have also informed many international institutions and organizations, about the negative impact on our national economy resulting from the implementation of the embargo while at the same time stressing the exceptions concerning medication and foodstuffs mentioned in Security Council resolution 661 (1990) itself. On the basis of these ideas, and completely in accordance with human rights principles, we reject, and have always rejected, the involvement of civilians in conflicts and any violation of their freedom of movement.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

Tunisia has always supported and upheld the moral authority of the United Nations. It has placed its capabilities at the service of the United Nations. The latest example of this was Tunisia's participation in the process of the independence of Namibia. We believe that the United Nations is the depositary of the high values enshrined in the Charter, which establishes an international code of conduct and remain firmly convinced that the Organization is able to shoulder its responsibilities in safeguarding peace, as it has done on many occasions in different parts of the world. Tunisia has been supported by the United Nations on every occasion whenever it suffered aggression because of its stance in favour of the cause of justice and freedom.

Our profound belief in international legality and firm commitment to its true meaning cannot be dissociated from each other. If the crisis in the Gulf is a form of a breach of legality, there are many precedents in the history of the United Nations that show that in the case of other injustices the voice of the United Nations has not been heard and there has been no deterrence. The most striking example of this is the injustice that has been inflicted on the Palestinian people, whose legitimate right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State on their own soil has been denied, while Israel persists in refusing to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories.

It is unnecessary to recall the dozens of resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council concerning the Palestinian cause which have so far remained dead letters because of Israeli stubbornness and disdain for international law.

We firmly believe the United Nations is called upon to implement its resolutions on this issue as assiduously and as firmly and trenchantly as it does in the case of the Gulf crisis lest people the world over get the impression that

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

the handling of world issues is selective, discriminatory and dependent on the parties involved, the interests at stake and the circumstances.

The current painful situation in the Gulf region, with the risk of explosion that it entails, must not make us forget the daily suffering of the Palestinian people, who, without weapons, is heroically resisting Israeli occupation, an occupation which is injurious to their identity, their existence and their land. From this rostrum we pay a heartfelt tribute to the heroic uprising, the intifadah, which is about to enter its fourth year of struggle, while acts of repression continue unabated. We once again make a pressing appeal to the international conscience to support firmly the Palestinian people, under their legitimate leadership, so that they may completely recover their right to independence, freedom and dignity.

Surely it is the international community's most urgent duty to oppose Israeli plans to modify the demographic map of the occupied Arab territories through the settlement of Jews from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands. In accordance with international legality and the resolutions of the United Nations, we stress the need to convene as soon as possible an international conference for peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, which, with a high sense of responsibility, has demonstrated its commitment to the search for a peaceful, just and lasting solution of the Palestinian problem and the conflict in the Middle East.

Fraternal Lebanon has recently made some progress towards a definitive solution guaranteeing to its people security, stability and territorial integrity.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

We welcome the progress that has been achieved, thanks to the determination of the children of Lebanon, in restoring harmony in the country, and thanks to their accurate assessment of their responsibility for overcoming the deadlock. This made it possible to arrive at the Taif Agreement and also made possible the continuing selfless work of the Arab Tripartite Commission, which is now tackling the last obstacles, which we hope will be removed as soon as possible in the higher interests of Lebanon and in order to bring about the return of calm and prosperity in the framework of reconciliation and civil peace.

While the Middle East has many crises that await solution, the region also has many positive aspects and a desire for stability and peace. I would like at this point to welcome the achievement of peaceful unity between the two Yemens and the emergence of a single unified Yemen.

We are firmly convinced of the ability of the United Nations to participate effectively in overcoming the Gulf crisis with its repercussions and find an appropriate solution to the conflict in the Middle East, just as it has done successfully in the case of other conflicts where it has shown itself to be on the side of justice and freedom, and quite capable of eliminating many hotbeds of tension.

We were profoundly pleased to see Namibia, that fraternal country, join the ranks of independent States and take its rightful place among nations, thanks to the unyielding struggle of its people and the support of the international community. We wish to pay tribute to the front-line States for the great sacrifices that they made to aid the cause of Namibia. We also laud the role played by the United Nations in support of the independence process in Namibia.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

I wish to take this opportunity to extend, on behalf of Tunisia, my warmest congratulations to the delegation of Namibia on the occasion of its admission to the United Nations as a full Member. We are certain that the young State of Namibia, whose people paid a high price for its independence, will fully play its role in the service of the African continent and in the service of the cause of justice, freedom and peace, by contributing to the strengthening of the Organization of African Unity and the efforts of the United Nations in the areas of development, stability, security and peace.

Proud to be African, Tunisia has unceasingly worked for solidarity among the Continent's peoples and will spare no effort in helping the Namibian people to build its young State in accordance with the recommendations of the Organization of African Unity. We hope that the international community will come to Namibia's aid in order to enable it to meet the challenge of development and progress.

The achievements and the progress made on the African continent in the field of decolonization and independence will remain incomplete as long as injustice persists in South Africa, where the white minority continues to violate the most basic of human rights by practising racial discrimination and violate international norms and conventions.

While expressing our joy over the release of the leader and freedom fighter Nelson Mandela who has regained his freedom after more than a quarter-century of imprisonment, we note with cautious optimism the few modest initiatives taken by the Government of South Africa, which in fact fall short of introducing the radical changes that would guarantee equality for all and establish a democratic régime where the majority is able to exercise its legitimate rights.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

That is why the international community must not relax its pressure in the form of an economic embargo or other effective measures until Pretoria complies with law and justice, especially now that these pressures are beginning to produce results and prove their effectiveness.

We must remain vigilant in order to thwart any intrigues and manoeuvres that may be designed to fuel antagonisms and internal strife in order to abort the expected process of change and spread terror and disorder.

Tunisia is following with deep concern the developments in the situation in Afghanistan. We have expressed our profound satisfaction following the signing of the Geneva conventions and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from that fraternal country, but the in-fighting among brothers unfortunately persists and continues to take a heavy toll in Afghani lives and cause destruction in the country.

It is our hope that international efforts to help Afghanistan recover its national unity within a framework of harmony will succeed and that it will be able to establish the system of its choice in full freedom and at last tackle the reconstruction and development of the country.

We express the same hope regarding the framework agreement concluded on 28 August 1990 by the five permanent members of the Security Council in respect of Cambodia. This agreement conferred important administrative responsibilities upon the United Nations. It is our hope that this will contribute to the settlement of the conflict that persists in that friendly country and that it will be possible to achieve lasting peace in the region. We also hope that the parties to the conflict will profit from this valuable opportunity to promote reconciliation among themselves through constructive and effective dialogue and thus restore harmony and peace to the Cambodian people.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

We also view with satisfaction the efforts made to unify the Korean peninsula. Tunisia, which has traditional bonds of friendship with the two States, is delighted at the resumption of contacts between the two with a view to reconciliation and national unity. We see in this a contribution that is bound to strengthen the climate of peace and co-operation in the Asian continent and the world at large. Perhaps we are not far from the day when we shall see the Korean peninsula represented in this Assembly.

The increasingly frequent use of peaceful means to resolve international disputes represents a positive element in the establishment of a world based on undestanding and agreement. But the strengthening of this tendency requires that we renounce the arms race. It requires the abandonment of the policy of hegemony and the use of force in international relations in order to arrive at complete disarmament - a prerequisite for international détente to be a reality. This détente has become a vital and urgent requirement not only to safeguard peace the world over but also because of its positive impact on the world economy which is now undergoing an untenable crisis one of whose main causes is the major imbalance between the considerable expenditures of industrialized countries on weaponry and the modest funds allocated to development assistance.

Undoubtedly, security, peace and stability will create an atmosphere of serenity in the developing countries and will make it possible for them to limit their military expenditures and thus to apply their potential to action for development.

Tunisia, on the strength of its convictions and pursuant to the path it has charted for itself at the regional level, has worked for the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region and, in this respect, we view

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

with satisfaction the understanding shown by our European friends and their growing conviction of the need for joint action in order to strengthen solidarity among Mediterranean States.

The question of pollution has unceasingly concerned the international community because of its negative impact on the environment. It has harmed to different degrees all the countries of the world in varying ways - for example, the pollution of the oceans and seas, desertification, soil erosion, deforestation, sudden and violent changes in global climate, as well as toxic wastes that certain industrialized countries attempt to dump on the territories of others, particularly in Africa.

Aware of the serious nature of this question, Tunisia reacted at the national level by taking the initiative in 1988 to create the national environmental protection agency and enacting the laws we need to combat all types of pollution.

On the African level, Tunisia is preparing to contribute effectively to the success of the Year of the Environment in Africa, which is planned for 1991, and we will thus show our readiness to co-operate with our African brethren and exchange experiences in this field.

Among the dangers threatening the integrity of the individual and the health of society is the spread of narcotic drugs. Although Tunisia is neither a producer nor a consumer of those drugs, it is resolutely fighting this scourge by establishing many control agencies in order to monitor probable transit points and stem the development of this traffic. It is acting in constant collaboration with specialized international agencies in order to eliminate this phenomenon.

Tunisia, which made radical changes in its society on 7 November 1987 - changes which led to the establishment of a democratic régime based on pluralism and freedom of thought in a State where law and institutions rule and which has

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

unceasingly worked to strengthen human and community rights - confirms its strong devotion and total commitment to the United Nations Charter and also proclaims its intention to translate the Charter's lofty purposes and principles into concrete reality on the national and international levels.

In that context, at the beginning of the year Tunisia presented a preliminary report concerning the implementation of the international Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to the Committee against Torture.

Tunisia also submitted on 16 and 17 July 1990 its third report on the implementation of the international Covenant of civil and political rights to the Commission concerned.

On another level, and pursuant to its desire to strengthen the rights of children, Tunisia signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which will be ratified in the very near future. We enthusiastically support the initiative to convene the World Summit for Children which will be an opportunity for the international community to voice its commitment to the rights of the child.

Furthermore, Tunisia supports all initiatives aimed at strengthening the rights of the handicapped.

Tunisia has been delighted at the profound changes that have occurred in today's world and, above all, in Eastern Europe with a view to enshrining public freedoms and the foundations of democracy and respect for human rights.

These are considerable achievements that augur well for an international community that can at last enjoy development, prosperity and dignity.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

On the other hand, we must in all objectivity voice our concern over the tendency to marginalize, at least in political discourse, the developing countries in general and the African continent in particular. That tendency, we believe, has a negative impact on the material and moral situation of the third world countries which are confronted by a situation of worsening poverty due to a reduction in external resources and the dichotomy between long-term development objectives and short-term structural adjustment.

While recognizing once again before the Assembly our responsibility to remedy that situation, we note with some bitterness that the major sacrifices made at the national level are gravely endangered because our financial obligations exceed our real ability to pay. In that respect, the study on the global economy conducted by the United Nations Secretariat as well as the World Bank report devoted this year to poverty, highlight the aggravation of that phenomenon and its negative impact on the resumption of development in the developing countries.

The World Bank has advocated the implementation of a strategy to fight that scourge, which will constitute the main challenge to the international community in the 1990s. We support that initiative, which buttresses the appeal made by the developing countries to the international financial institutions to take the social dimension into greater account in their economic recovery programmes. The success of that strategy, as we see it, will depend on an improvement in modalities of assistance and on increased support from the international community in the implementation of national policies freely established by the developing countries for the struggle against poverty.

Experience has shown that the developing countries cannot achieve sustained growth while withstanding the hardships of inflation and the weight of foreign indebtedness. Mr. Camdessus, the Director General of the International Monetary Fund, eloquently described that situation as one of "growth spurts". He also

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

stressed, at last July's session of the Economic and Social Council, the Fund's decision to contain and attenuate the effects of the recovery programmes in order to guarantee a better balance of adjustment, growth and social justice.

That initiative demonstrates the need to give priority to non-inflationary growth based on a system of multilateral co-ordination and broadened monitoring, even if the question of reconciling effectiveness and justice, productivity and humaneness, remains. In that respect, the President of the Republic, Mr. Ben Ali, had the opportunity, during his presidency of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), to express Tunisia's position on indebtedness to Mr. Bettino Craxi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the debt question, to whom we should like to extend our sincere thanks for the report now before the Assembly.

Need we dwell on the precarious situation of the indebted developing countries, and in particular on the situation of Tunisia, which is among the medium-income countries? We believe that Mr. Craxi's report reflects the main concerns expressed by our countries in that respect. It is our fear that the foreign debt problem may lead the international community and multilateral agencies into an impasse at a time when we see on the horizon the premises of a real peace. That may occur because of the absence of a real will to change international financial mechanisms and find an appropriate solution to the problem.*

In that respect, Tunisia supports the proposals contained in Mr. Craxi's report concerning a reconversion of bilateral debt through participation in the establishment of a development bank in the Mediterranean, the cancellation of debt-servicing for the least developed countries, and the establishment of new

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* Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

payment timetables from 30 to 40 years. The implementation of those proposals, we feel, would contribute to resolving the foreign debt crisis of the developing countries. Need we recall that a solution to the crisis constitutes one of the commitments undertaken by the international community at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the resumption of growth and development?

Towards that end, the special session of the General Assembly focused the collective and concerted will for action on the progressive alleviation of the profound imbalances current in the world economy, taking into greater account the role and interests of the developing countries. That session also had the merit of speeding up the integration of the Eastern European countries into the international economy and of facilitating their accession to international institutions in order to enable them to increase their role as dynamic trading partners.

We also view with satisfaction the contribution of that session to the strengthening of multilateralism in international economic relations. We take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance we attach to respect for the consensus achieved at the special session. We believe that to be all the more important now on the eve of two major gatherings - the eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the conclusion of negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the success of which will depend on respect for the interests of all, the effective participation of all countries, and their compliance with the conclusions that will be reached through the mobilization of the necessary political will.

The Declaration on International Economic Co-operation rightly stresses that an open and credible multilateral trade system is essential for the promotion of growth and development. We continue to believe that the establishment of such a system remains possible, bearing in mind the growing interdependence between

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

different sectors and national economies, and that it is indeed urgent in order to remedy the assymetry in structures of production and consumption at the global level.

Now that the growing interdependence of nations is broadly acknowledged, we must identify the ways and means of managing that interdependence in order to take into greater account the aspirations and legitimate concerns of all. Thus, the recent developments toward economic integration agreements and free-trade zones continue to arouse both hope and concern, given the challenges faced by less productive trade partners.

In our view, it is important to take measures to dispel those fears. We hope that the implementation of such arrangements will contribute to creating trade and not to distorting it. It is in that spirit that the five countries of the Maghreb created the AMU, one more step towards integration and co-operation among their peoples and the African peoples in general.

This year, important progress has been achieved in co-operation among the countries of the Maghreb. Tunisia had the honour to participate in the strengthening of that co-operation when it held the chairmanship of the AMU. We are convinced that concerted Maghreb action will continue in the interests of the peoples of the region in order to achieve economic and social development, and that that will be a factor of stability, understanding, and the strengthening of peace and security at the regional and international levels.

(Mr. Boulares, Tunisia)

In this respect, the Union of the Arab Maghreb has promoted the establishment of constructive and open co-operation with peace-loving nations and with most regional groups, especially those that are linked to the Union by traditional and historic relationships based on geographic proximity, particularly in the Mediterranean region, where it is possible to develop a platform of co-operation and understanding based on the principle of shared development for the sake of prosperity and the security of the coastal countries.

The co-operation that we seek to establish between the countries of the northern and southern Mediterranean should have as its objective the reduction of disparities, thanks to a freely-entered-into policy that tackles our development problems - first and foremost, indebtedness, immigration and the environment.

I should like, at the conclusion of my statement, to underscore the close interdependence between development imperatives and the continuation of the process of democracy in the developing countries. The phenomenon of economic recession that we have noted in many countries constitutes a real danger to regional and international peace.

In this respect, hopes for détente and international understanding would be jeopardized unless all member countries were to show resolute political will in the search for an equitable solution to the problem of indebtedness. This would be the best guarantee of a new international order, such as is perhaps just now emerging. The international community must therefore go beyond any selfishness and must establish co-operation and co-ordination between its members so that we can approach the third millennium with hope and serenity, and so that we can achieve development for all countries during this development decade, for which President Ben Ali appealed at the last session of the General Assembly.

Mr. ASAMOAH (Ghana): The close and cordial relations between Malta and my country give me added pleasure in conveying to the President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session the warm and sincere congratulations of the Ghana delegation on his unanimous election. My delegation looks forward with confidence to a rewarding and successful session under his able and distinguished leadership.

I should like also to congratulate his immediate predecessor, Major-General Joseph Garba, an illustrious son of Africa, on his outstanding contribution to the forty-fourth session.

I should like to take this opportunity to welcome Liechtenstein into membership of the United Nations. The prospects for the universality of this Organization being made complete in the near future are now bright indeed, and this is as it should be.

The international political climate has taken a sudden, paradoxical and alarming twist as a result of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Ghana had hoped that after eight years of wasteful war, attended by untold human suffering, the Gulf region would be spared another conflict. Unfortunately, that region's stability has once more been disturbed, and the threat of a wider conflict looms before us.

The Government of Ghana has already issued a statement totally rejecting the use of force in international relations and underlining Ghana's commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. We again call upon Iraq to withdraw its forces from Kuwait unconditionally and to settle its differences with Kuwait through peaceful negotiations. We also appeal to all to exercise maximum restraint and to give dialogue and diplomatic effort a chance.

The Gulf crisis points to other concerns, which are wider in their implications. The double standards, particularly on the part of the West, are as

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

revealing as they are unacceptable. The willingness to rush into action at the annexation of Kuwait contrasts sharply with the condoning of, and inaction over, Israel's occupation of Arab lands and with the benign neglect of Liberia. Again, for years, the Western countries have contended that economic sanctions would not work against South Africa. Suddenly, the same countries are eager to apply sanctions against Iraq.

And it is difficult not to see the response to Iraq at least partly in terms of the consistent exploitation of the third world through strategies that ensure the supply of cheap raw materials to the Western industrialized countries. On the other hand, policies of oil-rich third world countries that have facilitated the injection of billions of dollars in investment in Western industrialized countries contrast sharply with the lack of adequate resources to enable many a third world country to meet the basic requirements of economic development. These considerations cannot be overlooked, and in the face of them a great dilemma is posed to many third world countries having to withstand high oil prices as a result of a prolonged sanctions policy against Iraq. A secure world order is possible only on the basis of a consistent commitment to principle and to social justice.

The anxiety that has been displayed in respect of the Gulf crisis should be brought to bear also on Israel in the search for a solution to the Palestinian problem, which remains a major cause of instability in the Middle East. We reaffirm our support for the General Assembly's call for an international conference, under United Nations auspices, in which all parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, would participate on an equal footing to address the problem.

In Cyprus, the rising tension between the two communities is a matter of concern to my delegation. We call upon the two communities to abandon mutual

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

recriminations in favour of a more vigorous effort to promote reconciliation. In this regard, the Secretary-General's plan of action, aimed at assisting the two communities to reach a negotiated settlement, deserves a chance.

Recent developments in other areas, however, have augured well. Improved East-West relations continue to strengthen the prospects for peace. The super-Power summits in Malta and Washington and the ongoing Vienna talks, which should result in significant troop reductions, have raised new hopes for peace and stability in Europe, thus putting an end to four decades of division and mistrust in that continent.

We also welcome the recent Bush-Gorbachev agreement on the non-production of chemical weapons and on the destruction of their chemical-weapon stockpiles. It is the hope of my delegation that this agreement will provide the necessary impetus to the Geneva negotiations on chemical weapons. As a signatory to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, Ghana shares the international concern over the use and spread of chemical weapons. We look forward to a comprehensive treaty that will command universal adherence.

We hope that the lessons of the Vienna talks will not be lost on developing countries, much of whose expenditure on arms purchases, in our view, could have been channelled into socio-economic programmes to alleviate poverty and social hardship. Greater dedication to equity in North-South relations and observance of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member States, particularly the developing countries, would do much to encourage developing countries to exercise restraint in the acquisition of weapons.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

With regard to nuclear weapons, we are concerned at the slow progress of the ongoing negotiations after the encouraging start in 1988. Removing the threat of nuclear war, as stated by the General Assembly in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, remains the most urgent task of our day. Once again, we call upon the super-Powers to redeem their pledge.

By far the most significant import of improved East-West relations is the freedom and independence of East European countries and the forthcoming reunification of Germany. We hope that these developments will not open the door to internal instability, conflicts within and between those States arising out of ethnic rivalries and old boundary disputes. In a future of economic super-Powers, a reunited Germany would have pride of place, which should satisfy German sentiments and be a factor for peace. The free markets of Eastern Europe would, it is hoped, open further export opportunities for the third world countries, even though the greater competition for scarce Western resources will have an adverse impact on their development. Opportunities for educational facilities for nationals of third world countries and favourable economic and trade arrangements between those countries and the Eastern European countries appear to be in jeopardy. There is evidence of increased racism in the newly founded democracies of Eastern Europe, not to mention the possibility that East-West détente may threaten the efforts of third world countries to escape Western imperialism and neo-colonialism. So, while we welcome changes in Eastern Europe, we are also apprehensive about their impact upon the fortunes of the third world.

The eighteenth special session on the drug crisis held last February, and the forthcoming World Summit for Children, the first ever, underscore the overwhelming desire that the United Nations should be a primary player in our common endeavour to address two gigantic human problems of our times. Reinvigorating the world body

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

in the social area where, for so long, it has been only marginally effective, is an encouraging trend which my delegation supports. The carrying out of this and other crucial tasks, including peace-making and peace-keeping, however, demands a stronger and better-financed United Nations.

It is, therefore, a matter of regret that, despite the implementation of almost all of the budgetary and administrative reforms recommended by the 1985 Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts, the United Nations continues to face serious financial problems owing to the withholding of assessed contributions by some Member States. We call upon those withholding assessed contributions to comply with the financial requirements of membership.

My delegation welcomes the positive impetus to the Cambodian peace process in the shape of the new United Nations peace plan, which offers a framework for a comprehensive settlement aimed at ending the civil war in Cambodia. My delegation is also encouraged by reports about plans for a new political order that would end outside arms supplies to the warring Afghan factions and set up an impartial electoral process. We are equally encouraged by the positive developments in the Iran-Iraq peace process since the last session, particularly by concessions made by Iraq leading towards direct negotiations by the two countries and the repatriation of several thousands of prisoners of war. We call upon all the parties concerned and the international community to lend their fullest co-operation to these various peace processes.

We have followed positive trends in other parts of the world closely. The Republic of Yemen, which we welcome, is being represented here for the first time by one delegation. German reunification and the Roh-Gorbachev exploratory talks held in San Francisco in June 1990 have had their impact on the Korean peninsula, where discussions between delegations from North and South Korea and the exchange

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

of top-level visits are increasing. A resolve by both Koreas to settle their differences is the most secure basis for peace in the Korean peninsula. As sovereign independent States, either the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or the Republic of Korea, or both, are entitled to be admitted into the United Nations. It would be better still if by agreement between them they could follow the example of Yemen.

I would now like to turn to the African continent, where the global drive for peace has received a serious set-back through the current conflict in Liberia. Ghana and five other sister member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were compelled to send peace-keeping troops to Liberia in the context of the cease-fire monitoring group established at the end of the Banjul Summit on 7 August 1990 to stop the carnage and the destruction of property in that country. We appeal to all people of good will to extend support to the ECOWAS effort.

We would also appeal for early resumption of peace talks in Mozambique and Angola.

The adoption by the Security Council on 27 June 1990 of the Secretary-General's implementation plan on Western Sahara marks a significant step forward on the tortuous journey towards the settlement of the Western Sahara conflict. We call upon all parties to extend maximum co-operation in the implementation of the plan.

The road ahead for the realization of the General Assembly's objective of a non-racial democratic South Africa continues to be fraught with difficulties despite recent encouraging developments in southern Africa. As the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its resumed forty-fourth session shows, the political guidelines set forth in the 14 December 1989 Declaration are far from being met by South Africa. The report is timely, particularly in the

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

light of current attempts being made by Pretoria and by some Members of the United Nations towards the lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

Responsible public leaders and organizations, including the Commonwealth Committee of Nine Foreign Ministers and the July 1990 Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), have strongly urged that sanctions against South Africa should be maintained and strengthened. The truth of the matter is that there has been little progress towards dismantling apartheid. Meanwhile, right-wing elements and the security forces are fuelling conflict and carnage among blacks as a way of reversing the prospects for progress. Until there is clear evidence of an irreversible move for dismantling apartheid, the international community should continue to maintain the pressure on South Africa in the form of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions.

The global economic situation continues to be a source of concern to several developing countries, including mine. For sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, it is the same tragic tale of economic stagnation and declining living conditions, despite the structural adjustment programmes undertaken by several countries.

We appreciate the good will and practical support extended to Africa by the international community, but more needs to be done. We recognize that, in the foreseeable future, Africa will require substantial external assistance to supplement its own efforts.

But Africa requires the understanding by its development partners of the cultural environment in which the reform programmes must be implemented. It is important to stress this point in order to drive home some fundamental truths about the African situation, particularly in the light of the emerging views about new political conditionalities for extending assistance to Africa. This is not the time to widen the web of conditionalities, particularly if this will lead to the imposition of political concepts and constitutional processes that will undermine

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

national unity and stability. It is rather the time to adopt realistic attitudes towards redressing the unfavourable international environment, in particular problems of falling commodity prices, debt-servicing burdens, high interest rates and protectionism, which continue to undermine reform efforts of African Governments.

In the area of trade, developing countries continue to suffer from adverse terms of trade. While developing countries under their various restructuring programmes have liberalized their economies, the developed countries have given in to protectionist pressures and resorted increasingly to managed trade, as exemplified by the growing volume of voluntary export restraints, orderly marketing arrangements and bilateral agreements limiting trade. The international trading system, founded on the principle of non-discrimination, is littered with discriminatory arrangements.

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

The 1980s have also seen the magnitude of the external debt of developing countries grow in volume to the level of $1.3 trillion, of which Africa bears over $250 billion, with the debt still rising on account of rising interest rates and rescheduling. As the Secretary-General's Expert Group on Africa's commodity problems points out in its report, rescheduling of debt, unaccompanied by debt write-down, can lead to increased overall debt. Although there has been some progress in debt relief under the Toronto Agreement on the Paris Club debt, the impact has been inadequate both in scope and implementation. My delegation, therefore, wholeheartedly endorses the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Expert Group on Africa's debt, particularly those regarding increased efforts to reduce both the debt stock and the debt service; the granting of further relief by moving beyond the terms of the Toronto initiative in respect of the remaining Paris Club debt; and the availability of a moratorium of 3 to 10 years with interest charged at International Development Association (IDA) rates and the resources cost not deducted from aid allocations. My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate its call for an international conference on Africa's debt.

The flow of resources so critical to the long-term development needs of developing countries has been considerably reduced. The commercial banks are still reluctant to resume lending to highly indebted countries as their credit worthiness has been seriously eroded by the twin problems of external indebtedness and adverse terms of trade. Many low-income countries depend on official development assistance (ODA) for external finance to support their development programmes. But ODA flows have stagnated in real terms. Few industrialized countries have attained the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) in ODA flows to developing countries. In the face of the resource squeeze, structural adjustment programmes mounted by most African countries within the framework of the United

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 have had short-term perspectives as the necessary resources to support growth-oriented policies have not been forthcoming.

In calling for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to the revitalization of economic growth and development, in particular in the developing countries, the Group of 77 had expected purposeful and decisive international action to address the major constraints militating against their economic growth. But in the end consensus could be achieved only on the basis of bland assurances promising more of the same failed policies. For developing countries this was a disappointment. The international community missed a good opportunity to demonstrate its political will to find a lasting solution to some of the intractable problems confronting the developing world today.

Instead, refuge was sought in calls for democratic reform. In the 1980s the call was for economic reform. Developing countries followed the prescriptions for structural adjustment and yet continued to suffer economic malaise of a more virulent kind. Naturally they began to question the policy prescriptions and their underlying assumptions. The Economic Commission for Africa's alternative framework for structural adjustment should have been a welcome contribution to the debate. However, instead of its promoting a vigorous debate on, and critical analysis of, the reasons why economic reforms were not yielding the expected results, the focus quickly shifted from the need for economic reform to the lack of democratic reform as the primary constraint against economic recovery and development in the developing countries. Democratic reform has thus become the clarion call at the beginning of the 1990s.

I should like to address that question, as it is important to make the position of the Ghana Government quite clear. Implicit in the new clarion call is

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

the statement that the political systems of the developing countries are somehow flawed and perhaps Western-style political institutions are what is required to lift the developing countries out of their economic plight. Let me say unequivocally that we cherish the ideals of democracy. Our argument is that political institutions must be rooted in the culture and experience of the society concerned, not in an alien culture.

This position is reflected in Ghana in the sound beginning which we have already made towards representative government through the establishment of district assemblies, elected freely by secret ballot from multiple candidates. These assemblies constitute the vehicles for participation, at the grass-roots level, in decision-making. We are taking the process further by conducting national consultations on a future political system for our country. These consultations and the consensus emerging therefrom will fashion a system of government at the national level which rests on our value goals, particularly stability and national unity, and is rooted in our culture.

But no political system, however representative or democratic, can thrive in the face of grinding poverty and despondency. The experience of many countries demonstrates that democratic reform without economic justice sounds hollow to those ravaged by hunger, disease, illiteracy and misery. Freedom from want is as basic a human right as the right to choose the political system under which one lives.

Believing as it does in the promotion of, and respect for, human rights, the Government of Ghana has signed and ratified various international human rights instruments at the global and regional levels covering a wide range of rights and freedoms of the individual and of peoples. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which my country was the first Member State to ratify in

(Mr. Asamoah, Ghana)

furtherance of its resolve to protect and promote the rights of children, and the African Charter of Human and People's Rights which addresses the peculiar socio-cultural and economic considerations pertaining to African peoples. Equally important is the reflection of our commitment in our domestic policies and legislation.

The Government of Ghana looks forward to participating actively and constructively in the international Conference on Environment and Development which will be held in Brazil in 1992, for which the preparatory work has already begun. It is our hope that all aspects of environmental protection and preservation will be considered, including issues relating to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and resources in support of the sustainable development of the developing countries.

In conclusion, the poverty and declining living standards of Africa remain a major challenge to the international community. The objective of global peace will continue to be illusory as long as this challenge is unmet. The 1980s were characterized as the lost decade for development. At the dawn of the 1990s let us pledge together to avoid such a mockery of the closing decade of this century through our common and renewed endeavour to enhance the quality of life of the vast majority of the peoples of our planet. Collectively we have the capacity and the resources. We must match that capacity and those resources with our collective will.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.